

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 37 are pending in the present application of which claims 1 - 3, 14, 26 - 28 and 33 have been amended. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added. Applicants believe that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated May 14, 2002.

As To The Merits:

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner maintains the following rejections:

claims 1-27, 31, 32, 36 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Watanabe (U.S. Patent No. 5,717,776) in view of Sukegawa et al. (U. S. Patent No. 5,235,165); and

claims 28-30, 33, 34 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Watanabe in of Sukegawa et al. and Bradley et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,771,071).

Both of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

Significant structural arrangements of the applicants' claimed invention, as amended, now includes that the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

It is respectfully submitted that the applied references fail to disclose or fairly suggest such significant structural arrangements of the applicants' claimed invention concerning the passport transaction apparatus which is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

That is, when an applicant applies for an identification document such as a passport, it is required to carry out an identification of the applicant. The identification required to avoid the passport from being issued to anybody else trying to obtain the passport by just handing in documents and information necessary for the issuance.

The driver's license producing apparatus according to Watanabe carries out the identification by comparing a retina image captured by an eyesight-testing machine with retina data that has been stored in an integrated circuit card on the rear surface of the license. It is required that the retina data of the applicant is stored in the card beforehand. Therefore,

identification can be carried out for only renewing and not for newly issuing the license. Moreover, there is a problem that provision of the license with the integrated circuit card and collation of the retina image according to Watanabe result in complication of the system and increase in costs.

The automatic resident card dispensing system according to Sukegawa carries out the identification by providing questions on some of data items selected from the resident record data, and determining whether the applicant enters correct answers to the questions. However, the security of the system is not very high because anybody can easily obtain the data such as a date of birth and an address of the applicant to answer the questions. Furthermore, there is a problem that it can be troublesome and time-consuming for the applicant to enter answers to such questions.

In contrast, the object of the present invention is to solve the above problems of the prior art by utilizing the authentication line of the financial institution, the line that is already available in the market. To access a host in the financial institution and carry out a transaction, a user is required to insert a cash card and to input a password such that identification of the user can be executed. The same identification is utilized in the passport transaction according to the present invention. As a result, there is no need to build a complex system and the security of the identification can be improved. In addition, payment function of the financial institution can be

also utilized in the present invention to allow the applicant to carry out payment of the application fee simultaneously with the application. The application procedure can therefore be significantly simplified.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 1 - 3, 14, 26 - 28 and 33, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

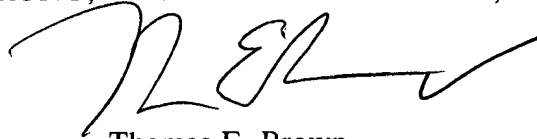
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendment

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 to 3, 14, 26 to 28, and 33 have been AMENDED to read as follows:

1. (Three Times Amended) A passport transaction apparatus connected to a residents database storing therein identification data of the residents and also connected to a center which executes an examination for issuance of passports through a communication line, said apparatus comprising:

a communication unit for communicating with said center;

an image input unit for inputting an image of the applicant for a passport;

a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for the passport transaction;

a data input unit for inputting data for the application according to the procedure for passport transaction displayed on said display unit;

a sign input for inputting a sign of the applicant; and

a control section for transmitting the data inputted by each of said input units to said center by using said communication unit and orchestrating said center so as to determine whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not based on the identification data for the applicant which has been recorded in said resident data base and on each of the transmitted input data;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

2. (Twice Amended) A passport transaction apparatus connected through a communication line to a center which executes an examination for issuance of passports as well as to a residents database which stores identification data of residents for providing services for issuing passports to applicants, said apparatus comprising:

a communication unit for communicating with said center and with said residents database;

an image input unit for inputting an image of an applicant for a passport;

a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for the passport transaction;

a data input unit for inputting data for the application according to procedure for passport transaction displayed on said display unit;

a sign input unit for inputting a sign of the applicant; and

a control section for transmitting the data inputted by each of said input units and the identification data of the applicant fetched using said communication unit to said center by using said communication unit and orchestrating said center so as to determine whether the passport is to be issued or not based on the transmitted data;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

3. (Twice Amended) A passport transaction apparatus connected to a center which provides the data for issuance of a certificate for an applicant and executes examination for issuance of passports for processing passport transactions through communication with the center via a communication line, said apparatus comprising:

- a communication unit for communicating with said center;
- an image input unit for inputting an image of the applicant;
- a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for the procedure for the passport transaction;
- a data input unit for inputting data for passport transaction according to the procedure displayed on said display unit;
- a printer unit for printing the image inputted by the image input unit and contents of the passport on a passport paper prepared previously;
- an issuer unit for issuing a passport obtained by printing with said printer unit; and
- a control unit for controlling the communications by said communication unit, image input by said image input unit, display by said display unit, data input by said data input unit and issuance of a passport by said issuer unit;

wherein said control unit sends the data inputted by each of said input units to said center using said communication unit and orchestrates said center so as to determine whether the passport is to be issued or not, and when it is determined that the passport is to be issued, makes the printer unit print the image of the applicant inputted by said image input unit and

contents of the passport onto a passport paper prepared previously, and makes the issuer unit issue the passport obtained by printing;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

14. (Twice Amended) A passport transaction apparatus for processing passport transactions with a storage medium which stores the data required for issuance of passports and the data for identifying the applicants for passports, said apparatus comprising:

- an image input unit for inputting an image of the applicant;
- a reader unit for reading out the data from said storage medium;
- a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for the passport transaction;
- a data input unit for inputting data for passport transactions according to the procedure for passport transaction displayed on said display unit;
- a printer unit for printing an image inputted by said image input unit and the contents of the passport onto a passport paper previously prepared;
- an issuer unit for issuing a passport obtained by printing with said printing unit;
- a control unit for controlling the communications by said communication unit, image input by said image input unit, display by said display unit, reading by said reader unit, data input by said data input unit and issuance of a passport by the issuing unit;

wherein said control unit determines whether the applied passport is to be issued or not based on the data read out by said reading unit, and when it is determined that the passport is to be issued, prints the image of applicant inputted by said image input unit and the contents of the passport previously printed onto a passport paper using the printing unit and issues the passport obtained by printing using the issuing unit; and

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

26. (Twice Amended) A passport transaction method applicable to a system in which a system is connected via a communication line to a center for providing data for issuance of a certificate to an applicant and executing examination for issuance of a passport for processing passport transactions via communication with the center, said method comprising:

a first step of inputting data for checking an applicant;

a second step of accessing said center and determining whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not by using the data inputted in the first step;

a third step of inputting, when it is determined in the second step that the applied for passport is to be issued, an image of the applicant; and

a fourth step of printing the image of the applicant and contents of description on the passport for inputting in the third step onto passport paper previously prepared, and issuing the passport obtained by printing;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

27. (Three Times Amended) A passport transaction method applicable to a system for processing passport transactions with a storage medium storing therein data required for issuance of passports as well as data for identifying applications for passports comprising:

a first step of reading out data required for issuance of a passport from the storage medium and data for identifying an applicant;

a second step of determining whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not according to the data read out in the first step;

a third step of inputting, when it is determined in the second step that the applied for passport is to be issued, an image of the applicant; and

a fourth step of printing the image of the applicant and contents of description on the passport inputted in the third step and issuing the passport obtained by printing;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

28. (Four Times Amended) A passport transaction system comprising:
- a center accessibly connected to a first database storing therein data for issuing certificates to applicants, registering data for issuance of passports in a second database, and executing examination for issuance of passports; and
 - at least one passport transaction apparatus connected via a communication line to said center for processing passport transactions by communicating with said center; wherein said passport transaction apparatus comprises
 - a communication unit for communicating with said center;
 - an image input unit for inputting an image of the applicant for a passport;
 - a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for passport transaction;
 - a data input unit for inputting data for passport transaction according to the contents of procedure displayed on the display unit;
 - a printer unit for printing the image inputted by the image input unit and contents of description on the passport onto a passport paper previously prepared;
 - an issuer unit for issuing the passport obtained by printing with said printer unit; and

a control unit for controlling the communications by said communication unit, image input by said image input unit, display by said display unit, data input by said data input unit and issuance of a passport by said issuer unit; while the control unit accesses the center using the communication unit, asks the center to make determination as to whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not according to the data inputted by the data input unit, and when it is determined that the applied for passport is to be issued, has an image of the applicant inputted by the image input unit and contents of description of the passport printed onto passport paper previously prepared and the passport obtained by printing issued with the issuing unit; and the center verifies the data inputted by the data input unit according to a request from the passport transaction apparatus to the first and second databases respectively by the way of communication with the communication unit and returns a reply as to whether each applied for passport is to be issued or not according to a result of verification;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

33. (Twice Amended) A passport transaction system comprising:

a first center having a first database with data required for issuance of certificates for applicants registered therein;

a second center for registering data for issuance of passports in a second database and also executing examination for issuance of passports; and

at least one passport transaction apparatus each connected via a communication line to the first and second centers for processing passport transactions for communicating with the first and second centers; wherein said passport transaction apparatus comprises:

- a communication unit for communicating with the first and second centers;
- an image input unit for inputting an image of an applicant for a passport;
- a display unit for providing guidance with displays of contents of procedure for passport transactions;
- a data input unit for inputting data for passport transactions according to the contents of procedure displayed on the displayed unit;
- a printing unit for printing the image inputted by the image input unit and contents of description of the passport onto passport paper previously prepared;
- an issuing unit for issuing a passport obtained by printing with the printing unit;
- a control unit for providing controls over communication by the communication unit, image input by the image input unit, displays by the display unit, data input by the data input unit, and issuance of passports by the issuing unit; while the control unit accesses the first and second centers respectively using the communication unit, verifies an applicant for a passport according to the data inputted with the data input unit, makes determination as to whether an applied for passport is to be issued or not, and when it is determined that the applied for

passport is to be issued, has the image of the applicant inputted by the image input unit and contents of description on the passport printed with the printing unit onto passport paper previously prepared and also has the passport obtained by printing issued with the issuing unit;

the first center verifies the data inputted by the data input unit according to a request for verification of an applicant for passport from the passport transaction apparatus to the first database by way of communication with the communication unit and returns a reply according to a result of verification as to whether the applicant is the person he claims to be or not; and

the second center verifies the data inputted by the data input unit according to a request from the passport transaction apparatus by way of communicating with the communication unit to the second database and returns a reply according to a result of verification as to whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution such as a bank or a credit card company that executes an authentication of the applicant, and that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.